

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional) Washington Area Operations Centers Chiefs Conference, 8-9 December 1988

FROM: Charles E. Allen
NIO for Warning
7E 47 Headquarters

EXTENSION

NO. NIC 03459-88

DATE 20 December 1988

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TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 03459-88
20 December 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Charles E. Allen
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT: Washington Area Operations Centers Chiefs Conference,
8-9 December 1988

1. As chairman of the Washington Area Operations Centers' Conference (WAOCC), I chaired the third meeting of this group (see attached agenda) on 8 and 9 December [redacted]. The WAOCC Conference is the longest standing forum in Washington for addressing the common problems of the 24-hour centers which link all the principal agencies involved in national security crisis management. The chairmanship of this Conference has been the responsibility of the NIO for Warning since 1978, but the Conference had lagged with the departure of David McManis. In fact, no meetings had been held for four years when I took over the warning portfolio. The WAOCC complements and supplements the work of the NSC-chaired Crisis Management Working Group (CMWG), which has a somewhat different membership and excludes some of the key intelligence centers.

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2. The smooth interaction of the centers, including those at the White House, CIA, NMCC, NMIC, Treasury, NSA, State and others, has become an important feature of national security crisis management. There is a considerable backlog of issues to be discussed and problems to be solved among the centers. With the cooperation of the White House Support Staff, I have reintroduced the WAOCC as a forum and have used the off-site conferences to debate and resolve problems, especially those related to passing crisis information securely and quickly. All center chiefs agree on the need for dialogue and careful guidance of centers' operations, which communications technology has transformed into a key arm of our intelligence support to policy makers in real time.

3. The latest conference focused on transition issues as they are affecting operations in the member centers. I took the lead by presenting an overview of the procedural and substantive warning issues that will be early topics for the new Administration. These include:

- New assessments of warning in Europe in light of Gorbachev's announcements and changes in Soviet readiness;

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- Efforts to extend warning times on the Korean Peninsula;
- Pressures from JCS, OSD, NSC and Congress for warning support of new defense and national mobilization policies; and
- A world-wide review of challenges facing the new policy team.

4. Officials from the White House Support Staff gave a briefing on their interaction with key figures in both the national security and domestic crisis management councils. In their view, the most important challenge of the transition to the operations centers is to help new players build the informal networks essential to smooth policy deliberations.

5. The center chiefs also concentrated on practical issues that affect them all. These included:

- Completion of handbooks on the crisis management process and intelligence support provided by the centers to crisis managers;
- Status of secure video telecommunications systems upgrade; and
- The need for a common training curriculum for watch standers.

The conferees strongly endorsed the need to continue regular meetings of the WAOCC so as to share practical problems and solutions and develop smooth working relationships among the centers for crisis support. Considerable frustration was expressed over the problems that have occurred in bringing on-line the secure videoconferencing for a number of subscribers. [redacted] has been spent on this system thus far, and a number of second echelon subscribers cannot get their systems certified for use because of what appears to be excessively strict security problems.

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6. In response to the chiefs' request, I plan to hold additional WAOCC meetings in 1989. Among the issues we will address are manning of the centers, augmentation strategies during crises, crisis management case studies, and more effective use of the secure videoconferencing system. Common training issues for watch standers is an issue which I have assigned to the National Warning Staff to work in conjunction with CIA's Office of Training and Education and the Defense Intelligence College.


Charles E. Allen

Attachment:
As stated

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